

## **Effective Organizational Systems**

*Great institutions survive because their missions are timeless, ethical, and imperative. Yet while the 4-H mission endures, new approaches to achieve the mission require new ways of thinking and working. We need a deeper understanding of how we can be the best.*

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California

### **4-H Computer Corps**

#### **Program Description:**

The California 4-H Computer Corps assists, in a variety of methods, to integrate computer and informational technology into the 4-H Youth Development Program. The Corps is composed of 14 youth members, aged 14-18, four adult advisors, and one extension staff. The Corps is responsible for the administration of the official California 4-H website, leading computer workshops at 4-H and non-4-H conferences, administering and maintaining the California 4-H conference registration program, developing CD's of interactive workshop curriculum, and offering assistance to 4-H clubs in developing websites.

Members of the Computer Corps gain specific skills in computer technology, teaching, writing, and editing, while also learning about organizational behavior and communication in a multi-local system where members are spread throughout the state. The Computer Corps helps other 4-H and non-4-H members gain specific skills through workshop trainings, increases positive communication through the use of the California 4-H website and e-mail lists, and responds to all e-mail communication pertaining to the California 4-H program (from the website).

#### **Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

Computer Corps members meet face-to-face three times a year, meet online each month, and lead workshops at the California 4-H State Leadership Conference and the California 4-H State Leaders' Forum. Other trainings are held in different locations throughout the state and at various times during the year. The Computer Corps acts as a guide to 4-H members creating 4-H club/project websites, offering advice and suggestions from page layout to server hosting suggestions. The Computer Corps helps 4-H members gain specific skills in Microsoft Office, website design, graphics, computer hardware, buying computers, and other information technology topics. The official California 4-H website administered and maintained by the Computer Corps is kept current and updated. The website enables 4-H members to obtain electronic forms; get information on conference, council, and leadership activities; and have a resource for 4-H information. The California 4-H server also hosts the National 4-H Technology Conference website.

The Computer Corps is known for its high level of positive youth/adult partnership. Each member, whether an adult or youth, relates as equals – each person can provide input, can volunteer for tasks, and is empowered to complete his/her responsibilities. The Computer Corps

is highly motivated, due to both the responsibilities of the California 4-H website and responding to electronic communication for the California 4-H program.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

Communication in the California 4-H Program has increased as a direct result of the website being kept current and updated with relevant information. Hits to the website have increased more than 20% each year since the Computer Corps starting administering the site in June 1998. The California 4-H website is one of the only official state 4-H websites administered by 4-H youth and adult volunteers instead of extension staff.

Participation in the Computer Corps workshops at the California 4-H State Leadership Conference (400+ youth delegates) and the California 4-H State Leaders' Forum (300+ adult delegates) has always been at the workshop maximum. A special project of the Computer Corps was a California 4-H Web Registration Program for both of these conferences. This system allowed counties/delegates to register for the conference online, along with modifying and deleting existing registrations, viewing conference statistics, and viewing payment information. The retail value of this system was estimated at \$15,000.

In addition, the California 4-H Computer Corps was highlighted at the 2000 National 4-H Technology Conference as a model for other states. Materials developed by the Computer Corps have been used by other states in their state 4-H technology teams.

**Resource Commitment:**

The Thomas and Dorothy Leavey Foundation through The California 4-H Foundation provided financial resources including transportation and administration costs. The University of California Cooperative Extension provided for the server. The Hewlett-Packard Corporation provided a mobile laptop computer lab with twenty laptops and all networking components.

**Collaborators:**

The California 4-H Computer Corps works in collaboration with the California State 4-H Office, The California 4-H Foundation, and county 4-H Offices.

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*New Hampshire*

## **Teen Assessment Project (TAP) ... Supporting Youth, Strengthening Families, Building Strong Communities**

### **Situation:**

Youth face many challenges as they grow and develop. While most adolescents manage the transition from the world of childhood to adulthood successfully, some youngsters have difficulty negotiating these changes.

Of 33 states, the Centers for Disease Control 1999 data indicate NH high school students rank 16<sup>th</sup> highest in smoking (34%) in the past 30 days, 11<sup>th</sup> in alcohol use (53%), 6<sup>th</sup> in marijuana use (30%), and 3<sup>rd</sup> in ever having used inhalants (19%). In addition, NH youth rank 14<sup>th</sup> in attempting suicide in the past year (8%) and 20<sup>th</sup> in ever having had sexual intercourse (43%). NH communities want to support the positive development of youth and see needs assessment and coalition building as essential in bringing together youth, families, and communities to work towards this effort.

### **Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

Teen Assessment Program (TAP) is supported by 6 FTEs. About 15-30 coalition members/volunteers per community group meet on a regular basis supporting local efforts. Many NH communities have found TAP to be a successful model for identifying youth behaviors and attitudes, educating parents and community members, and facilitating the formation of sustainable and empowered community-wide coalitions. In 1998, a random sample of parents in a higher socio-economic level school district revealed that 86% of parents with high school students, 100% of parents with middle school students, and 91% of parents with grade school students found the TAP parent newsletters to be very valuable to themselves and their community.

### **Accomplishments and Impacts:**

TAP surveys have been administered to more than 22,000 youth in 20 school districts from 85 communities in New Hampshire. In the 20 school districts, about 600 TAP research reports and 5,000 executive summaries have been distributed. Media strategies resulted in widespread newspaper, TV, and radio coverage. A multi-part, topic-specific parent newsletter series containing local research data was mailed to the parents of 22,000 youth. About 3,000 individuals have been reached with public presentations of TAP data, and 2,500 parents attended forums on youth issues.

A 1999 random-sample parent telephone survey to evaluate the effectiveness of the TAP parent newsletters reached 34% of 259 parents in one school district in a lower socio-economic area. The survey revealed that 61% (53) considered the TAP newsletter series of value; 62% (54) became more aware of youth issues; and 72% (63) increased their knowledge and understanding of teen issues.

The parents also reported changes in attitudes and behavior such as: 71% (62) reported the

newsletters stimulated parent-teen communication; 83% (72) felt encouraged to share their opinions and values about risky behaviors with their teens; 35% (30) increased parental monitoring; 41% (36) wanted to become involved with others to address teen issues; and 93% (81) responded that newsletters were the most helpful way to receive parenting information.

Many communities in New Hampshire have found TAP to be a successful model for identifying youth issues while also encouraging the formation of sustainable, community-wide coalitions. As a result of TAP, numerous state and local partnerships/collaborations have been formed and/or strengthened. Volunteers (600) have worked in coalitions in their local communities to conduct TAP.

The process encourages the development of work teams (TAP core management, contract development, media relations, survey development, youth resource card development, survey administration, dissemination planning, evaluation, grant development) with members of the coalition serving as team leaders, thereby strengthening leadership skills and building a system of operation for accomplishing future goals.

Enhanced community cohesiveness and collaboration among individuals, organizations, and agencies on behalf of youth create the synergy required to respond effectively to the issues identified by the survey. Following a review of TAP data, grants have been secured by community groups, agencies, and schools to expand or initiate programs, with the goal of decreasing risky youth behavior and increasing supports for youth. In FY 2000, TAP enabled groups to secure \$6,664,350 in funding to support TAP and resulting local initiatives. Some examples of new programs initiated include: a teen health center, suicide prevention work, coalition and partnership development, teen centers, additional personnel for local initiatives, educational efforts, and after-school programs.

### **Program Description:**

TAP's primary goals are to partner with local collaborative groups to survey youth to increase community awareness and knowledge of local teen issues and help communities address issues of concern. Objectives include stimulating program and policy changes; building protective factors and reducing risk factors at the youth, family, school, and community level; strengthening community partnerships and coalitions; and helping communities secure funding for local follow-up initiatives. TAP sets a baseline from which to evaluate the impact of local initiatives.

TAP starts by forming a local steering committee or coalition that includes youth, parents, school personnel, the spiritual community, law enforcement, local businesses, health professionals, prevention specialists, organizations, community leaders, agencies, policy makers, and all others who care about the well-being of youth. The local steering committee customizes and administers a 160-item youth survey to teens in grades 7-12. Survey components include teen attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors, both positive and problematic. A comprehensive research report "Tapping Into Teens' Concerns, Perceptions, and Behavior" documents the local survey results and is shared with the community.

A six-part newsletter series titled "Whose Kids?...Our Kids!" features *local* survey results and

includes the following topics: parent-teen communication; teen use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs; teen sexuality; depression and suicide; parent-teen relationships; and working together: youth, families, schools, and communities. Following the mailing of each parent newsletter, a parent-teen forum is held to discuss the topic featured in the newsletter. Utilizing survey results, the community coalition determines goals, strategies, and action plans to address local youth issues. Finally, the impacts of TAP are evaluated.

**Resource Commitment:**

TAP is supported by UNH Cooperative Extension, state agencies, private foundations, and local businesses and agencies. TAP state level grants secured in FY 2000 totaled \$203,205. Funders included: NH Charitable Foundation, Strafford County Incentive Funds, NH Bureau of Substance Abuse Services, NH Department of Education, NH Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, and Plus Time New Hampshire Americorps\*VISTA Program.

**Collaborators:**

NH Cooperative Extension staff; UNH Department faculty; numerous state agencies; and local community members, agencies, and organizations.

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*Kentucky*

## **Interactive Telephone Trainings**

**Situation:**

The CYFERnet Program was looking for innovative methods to make the CYFERnet more interactive, as well as ways to provide research-based information to county and state Cooperative Extension Service (CES) personnel. After analyzing various alternatives, it was determined that interactive telephone trainings with experts on topics determined by the CYFERnet needs assessment survey would be offered. These telephone trainings would be offered to CES personnel (and non-Extension personnel if there was an interest) throughout the United States and its territories.

**Program Description:**

The CYFERnet needs assessment survey conducted with extension personnel at the community/county and state levels identified three primary areas of needs for State Strengthening and New Community sites: diversity, violence prevention, and parental involvement. Therefore, these topics plus additional ones were (or will be offered) through interactive telephone trainings. Subject matter experts volunteered or were recruited from the Children, Youth, and Families at Risk initiative. Listservs were used to market the specific trainings to CES personnel (State Extension Directors, State 4-H/Youth Development Directors, State FCS Directors, State Directors for State Strengthening and New Community Projects) throughout the country. The target audiences were extension personnel from both rural and urban

areas. It was expected that the interactive telephone trainings would open the world of CYFERnet resources on the web to multiple states.

### **Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

This has been a multi-state effort, and thus it is impossible to determine FTE commitment to the project; however, it is believed that little effort has produced tremendous benefit to the entire system. To date, three interactive telephone trainings have been conducted with one training topic expanded to a second training due to the high demand for the topic (Kids and Computers). In addition, other telephone conference sites have been approached as telephone lines have had to be increased from 20 to 30 due to demand, thus indicating stakeholders satisfaction with the program.

### **Accomplishments and Impacts:**

Interactive telephone trainings, including extension experts facilitating the trainings, have included the following topics:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Experts</b>	<b># of Participants</b>
<b>January</b>	<b>African American Inventors</b>	<b>KY OH MO</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>May</b>	<b>Kids and Computers</b>	<b>MO MN</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>June</b>	<b>Kids and Computers</b>	<b>MO MN</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>August</b>	<b>Web-Based Evaluation Training Modules</b>	<b>NC AZ</b>	<b>28</b>

Future interactive telephone training topics include: Couples Education, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grants, Being a Parent Educator, and MAPPP.

In addition to the interactive telephone training, there were complementary web-based information and PowerPoint presentations appropriate to the topic at <http://www.cyfernet.org>. "Ask the Experts" links on the site allowed training participants and others to contact the expert with additional questions. This option was available for one month following the call.

### **Resource Commitment:**

Federal dollars through the CYFERnet Program and CYFERnet-Technology were expended to pay for time commitments of state staff who set up and managed the system. Experts volunteered state dollars to pay for their salary/time. Each site involved with the interactive telephone trainings was expected to pay for its own call.

**Collaborators:**

The principal collaborators were CYFERnet Program (Kentucky) and CYFERnet-Evaluation (Minnesota), plus the experts from the states previously mentioned.

**Contact Persons:**

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**Other Base Program Areas this Programs Applies to:**

Family Development & Resource Management

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*Colorado***School Enrichment Survey****Situation:**

School enrichment has become the most widely used delivery mode in providing educational experiences through the 4-H Youth Development program. In 2000, 3,640,115 youth were members of 131,912 4-H school enrichment programs, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Some national data exist that document benefits and challenges of non-traditional delivery of 4-H materials; however, school enrichment varies greatly among and within states.

**Program Description:**

Selected 4-H Youth agents from around the state of Colorado were surveyed as to school enrichment and educational outreach programming. Agents were asked to identify the nature of each of the school enrichment projects that their offices had conducted during the year. A school enrichment project was defined for the purposes of this survey as “a project that takes place during school hours (8 a.m.-3 p.m.); it was not camp, or an activity that takes place before or after the school day.” Additionally, agents were asked to describe the impact of the projects, as well as the factors that contribute to the success of each project.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

In the 20 counties surveyed, agents reported the degree to which they were facilitating school enrichment projects. In the questioning process many agents needed to have the term “school enrichment” defined. Some agents wanted to include other School Age Child Care (SACC) activities that they facilitated either before or after school, during the summer, and during the weekends. Once it was re-stated that school enrichment projects took place during the hours of the school day, the agents in the study were, nearly without exception, able to report what it was that their office did in terms of school enrichment projects.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

Agents worked in a variety of school settings. School enrichment projects were implemented in early childhood settings and in elementary, middle, and high schools.

<b>% Agents Focusing on Various Grade Levels in Public, Private, and/or Home School</b>	
<b>High School</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Middle School</b>	<b>50%</b>
<b>Elementary School</b>	<b>80%</b>
<b>Early Childhood Settings</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>One Level Only</b>	<b>30%</b>

The majority of the school enrichment work was done by the agent him/herself. Frequently, agents acted as consultants, training teachers on curriculum uses and providing instructional materials. Although it was most often the agent who delivered the instructional material, volunteers often presented material as well. Agents in this case served as trainers of the volunteers. Agents periodically enlisted the assistance of others from outside agencies to serve as guest speakers at schools. While each agent took on the majority of the work in carrying out school enrichment projects, only 20% of those surveyed reportedly completed all of the efforts alone. Of the majority who worked with others, 35% of agents reported they enlisted volunteers to assist, 40% of agents collaborated with outside agencies, and 55% of the agents acted as a consultant to the teachers within the local schools. Nearly half of the county agents surveyed were invested in more than two collaborative partnerships.

In order to implement school enrichment projects in the schools, agents reported it was necessary for them to pass the necessary institutional gatekeepers. Each of the agents used different tactics to gain access to students in the schools within their counties. Agents overwhelmingly reported that it was essential to their success to establish a significant relationship with one teacher in each school building. More than half of the agents reported working directly with one teacher to gain entrance to the school or schools. Others shared that they met one teacher and were invited to give a guest lecture in his/her classroom, and word of mouth provided marketing in some counties, as one teacher told another and so on.

In addition to agents working with teachers, several agents reported meeting with principals, school superintendents, school board representatives, librarians, and district home-school science fair organizers to gain access to the students in the classroom. Agents reported a variety of different approaches to initiating contact with the various schools, including sending letters to principals, making appointments with school department heads, or distributing pamphlets or letters to teachers in their school mailboxes.

#### **Perceived Impact of School Enrichment**

Increased conceptual knowledge for youth	85%
Acquisition or review of skills	80%
Strengthened relationship with teachers	40%
Teaches life skills and character, supplements state curriculum standards, gets the word out about 4-H	35%
Disseminates information	25%

**Resource Commitment:**

CSUCE Funds supported .1 FTE in the School of Education to support outreach to schools and research.

**Collaborators:**

This project was possible through a collaborative partnership between Colorado State University Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development and the School of Education, which facilitated the design, implementation, evaluation, and reporting of the survey. Twenty counties that had reported school enrichment activity were identified and surveyed.

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*Texas*

## **Online Standardized Evaluation Instrument for 4-H**

**Situation:**

County extension agents—4-H have long depended heavily on self testimonials to establish the success or failure of their youth development program. As a result of these personal observations, county extension agents that emphasize 4-H and youth development programming have experienced difficulty revealing proper evaluation procedures and documentation for their annual plan of work and interpretive activities. As the Texas Legislature will only allocate increased funding based on special initiatives, proof of program impact is particularly important. An evaluation instrument has been developed for these county extension agents to utilize online. The instrument followed the procedures developed by Hendricks (1996) and Horton, Hutchinson, Barkman, Machtmes, and Myers (1999) to identify specific attributes that should be gained by youth experiencing 4-H. Also, through collaborations with specific subject matter specialists, statements were developed to measure perceptual knowledge of young people based upon their participation in specific project areas. Twenty project related instruments are available online. Following the download of the PDF document and administration to program participants, responses are inputted to a corresponding set of radial buttons. Following submission, a report is immediately made available showing the frequencies, percentages, and distribution of means.

**Program Description:**

The audience is all county extension agents from the 254 Texas counties. County extension agents must prove the educational impact of their programs to help continue extension funding. The online evaluation instrument will provide an easily accessible instrument with opportunity for outcome-based results that can readily be used for interpretive events and resource development.

**Stakeholder Satisfaction:**

Seven 4-H faculty members served on the focus group that initially developed the instrument. Following an extensive literature review, an instrument was developed and pre-piloted at nine statewide activities. Two additional extension faculty members were brought in related to the online accessibility. The individuals are with the Extension Education Department of the university and worked cooperatively to make the instrument online accessible. Thirty-seven subject matter specialists across the university were included to review and offer suggestions for the program outcome section, which measures specific outcomes of project areas. The online instrument was debuted to a gathering of district extension directors and 4-H specialists who supervise the 4-H program in the twelve Texas extension districts. Each of the twelve districts was included in a training option to travel to each district headquarters during the fall of 2001 to train agents concerning the use of the instruments, particularly as it relates to their incorporation into the outcome plan of their annual plan of work. Ten counties were included in the online pilot process. High levels of satisfaction were received from the county extension agents regarding both the set-up of the instrument and the ease of access. They also strongly valued the set-up, as for several years an expectation had been in place for them to measure the outcome of their programs but very little was available to do it.

**Accomplishments and Impacts:**

Initial response from the county extension agents was highly favorable. As this program is in its infancy, we will look forward to the end of the next planning and reporting cycle to ascertain the level of usage. Implications from county use include the opportunity to aggregate the results into a statewide impact statement related to project activities. This defensible data will be particularly important during the next funding biennium through the Texas Legislature.

**Resource Commitment:**

In addition to in-kind contribution of salaries and website development and grant for \$3,000 was submitted focusing on travel to conduct trainings related to the instrument around the state at district meetings and professional workshops.

**Collaborators:**

Interdepartmental collaboration was realized among Texas 4-H, Extension Education and Evaluation, Animal Science, and Family Development and Resource Management, as well as collaboration among the Agricultural Education Departments of Texas A&M University and Texas Tech University.

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**Other Base Program Areas this Program Applies to:**

Family Development & Resource Management, Agriculture, Leadership & Volunteer Development